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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
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Over the Sudan
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Nuqrashi's Firm Stand on Sudan Question

1. To avert the early downfall of his cabinet, Premier Nuqrashi assumed a firm stand on the Sudan controversy during a Parliamentary session on 31 December 1946 when he condemned the unfriendly attitude of Sir Hubert Huddleston, Governor-General of the Sudan. This declaration prevented a concerted attack by the opposition, at a time when the provocative statements of the Governor-General and the hostile actions of Abd-al-Rahman al-Mahdi had inflamed Egyptian public opinion. By this move, Nuqrashi gained the conditional support of Hafiz Ramadan's National Party and Makram Ubayd's Kutlah Party.

National Party Decision

2. The Administrative Board of the National Party met early in January under the Presidency of Hafiz Ramadan, and in the presence of Muhammad Zaki Ali, Abd-al-Rahman al-Rafi'i, Fikri Abaza and Abd-al-Aziz al-Sufani made several decisions, including the intensification of boycotting, the ending of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations and the observance of 19 January 1947 as a day for general mourning.

Action of the Opposition

3. With the exception of the Wafd, the opposition elements united under the leadership of Hafiz Ramadan and Makram Ubayd and prepared to present their demands, which included:
 - (a) The issuance of a Royal decree, terminating the services of the Governor-General, in accordance with the terms of the 1899 Condominium.
 - (b) The summary disruption of the negotiations.
 - (c) The denunciation of the 1899 Condominium, as well as the 1936 Treaty.

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4. Hafiz Ramadan, who was delegated to negotiate with Nuqrashi on behalf of Makram Ubayd, Ali Mahir, Abd-al-Rahman al-Rafi'i, Hafiz Afifi and Mustafa Mahmud al-Shurbagi, met Nuqrashi on 7 January 1947. Nuqrashi expressed his readiness to comply with the wishes of the people. Painting a black picture of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, he declared that he had no choice but to resign his post, or to continue in office if all the parties were determined to support him in his difficult task. In this case, he stated that he was prepared for any sacrifices for the welfare of the country. Ramadan, thereupon, reassured Nuqrashi that he could rely on the support of the group represented by the former, on the basis of the conditions set forth by the opposition.
5. Expressing doubt as to the true intentions of Nuqrashi, and suspecting another attempt at delaying tactics in compliance with British wishes, Ali Mahir recommended a watchful policy, pending fulfillment of the Premier's promises. Not satisfied with the results of Ramadan's conversation with Nuqrashi, Hafiz Afifi was delegated to meet the Premier to insure against a violation of his commitments. Nuqrashi gave the same assurances to Afifi, but declined a request to designate 19 January 1947 a day of mourning and general strike, in memory of the signing of the Sudan Condominium in 1899. This incident renewed the strained relations between the government and the opposition, and while preparations were made to observe this date, Nuqrashi issued orders to suppress all demonstrations.

Faruq's Absence from Cairo

6. Having been unsuccessful in his efforts to remedy the situation, King Faruq was advised to take leave in Upper Egypt. His position was believed to be growing more critical and a decision will soon have to be made with respect to his stand in the controversy. He is anxious to maintain friendly relations with the British but is unable to stabilize the government, and the possibility of new elections and the return of Mustafa al-Nahhas to power continue to harass Faruq.

Public Reaction to Sudanese Question

7. Sections of the Egyptian public who are well informed in public affairs appear to have forgotten temporarily about the negotiations but are angrily condemning the declarations of Sir Hubert Huddleston. Nationalist political circles, in particular, resent the movement of secession sponsored by Abd-al-Rahman al-Mahdi, in agreement with the British Government. Mr. Attlee's confirmation of the rights of the Sudanese to decide their own fate, the plans for the expansion of the existing Administrative Council in the Sudan, the promulgation of a law recognizing the "Sudanese nationality", and the claiming of total independence for the Sudan are viewed in the light of a premeditated plan to impose British will upon Egypt.

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Cabinet Deliberations

- At a Council of Ministers' meeting on 24 December 1946, Nuqrashi, aware of his delicate position, had consented to request the British government to restrain the Governor-General and the other British officials who supported him. Reviewing the case of the Grand Cadi of the Sudan, Sheikh Hasan Ma'mun, whose contract ended on 2 January 1947, the Egyptian Cabinet at later meetings directed Nuqrashi to make representations, in an effort to keep this Egyptian official in office for another term. The letter of the Governor-General to Nuqrashi, serving notice of the termination of the services of the Sheikh, was introduced as evidence of the true intentions of the British policy to evict the remnants of Egyptian influence from the Sudan. Although Nuqrashi stated that he had protested orally to Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador, the ministers insisted on sending a written protest to London.
9. There was a disagreement as to the advisability of withdrawing all of the remaining Egyptian officials who occupied senior posts in the Sudan. It was then decided to advise these officials not to cooperate with the Sudanese Administration, but to receive their instructions directly from Cairo. Nuqrashi was asked to procure an official assurance from the British government to the effect that Britain will not foster the secession of the Sudan from Egypt. These deliberations continued in the Senate and in Parliament but the prospects for a uniform Egyptian policy were marred by internal dissensions within the leading government parties and between the Sa'dists and the Liberal-Constitutionals. At recent meetings between Ronald Campbell and Nuqrashi, the British Ambassador urged the postponement of the Sudan question, until all the other problems are promptly settled.


Arab League Attitude

10. Discussing the subject of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on many occasions, the League Council pronounced itself in support of the Egyptian stand, inasmuch as "the aim of the Arab League is to restore the rights of the Arab nations, helping them to achieve their independence." The League also vaguely confirmed the unity of the Nile Valley, because of the desire of the inhabitants of the Valley to unite their destiny, under the guidance of Egypt. Although the League's repeated statements favoring the cause of Egypt appealed to the Egyptians, it failed to prescribe a method for achieving these aims.

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Salah Harb's Statement

11. Early in January, Muhammad Salah Harb, President of the YMCA,* issued a statement, severely criticizing the British nation. Ordinarily such a declaration would have been suppressed, but Muqrashi allowed its circulation in an effort at reconciliation. Soon an official note from the British authorities protested against this unfriendly act.

*Young Men's Moslem Association

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